

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

Name of First Writer

Based on, If Any

Address
Phone Number

CLOSE - THE PIRATE'S LIFELESS FACE as we TILT UP TO--

BAYTA. The real Mule. Shuddering like she was doused in ice water. She touches her face, fingers coming away with blood.

She looks up. Toran is staring at her, numb. She can't meet his eye. Not right now.

BLOOD has pearled on her cheeks. Three drops each side.
Sympathetic scars to match Gaal's.

Pritcher helps her up.

PRITCHER

Are you hurt?

She straights up, reclaiming some of herself. Powerful again.

BAYTA

Where is Dornick going?

There's regret in Pritcher's voice when he answers, a sense that it costs him something, but he doesn't hesitate:

PRITCHER

Back to the Second Foundation.

Forgotten Imperial planet.

(beat)

Ignis.

And they stand there, the two of them, with mercenaries and watchmen at their back...

Looking out at cold space, as we...

CUT TO:

We look past Foundation Station toward the surface.

Bayta walks through the field toward the Vault. A glint of light, and she realizes: SELDON is waiting for her.

BAYTA

You came back down to the surface.

SELDON

I wanted to speak with you.

BAYTA

You know, I still find this to be a really motivating image.

SELDON

Want to see inside?

Bayta weighs something.

BAYTA

I seem to remember you almost tore the pirate to ribbons. Do I want to risk that?

SELDON

I could do it from out here, too. I haven't. Maybe you'd like to find out why. Up to you.

He turns and heads to the Vault. She follows.

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INT. THE VAULT - SELDON'S OFFICE - DUSK (NEW TERMINUS)

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Dr. Seldon and Bayta are settled inside the office, as if they've always been here. She's sipping a drink.

BAYTA

(re: the drink)

Very brace. Tastes real.

SELDON

It is real. Or close enough. Do I call you "The Mule"? That seems cumbersome.

BAYTA

Bayta.

SELDON

When the pirate was here, you were controlling him.

BAYTA

Little messier than that. Bit of him, bit of me. And I can't be everywhere at once, there are other eyes to look out of, in addition to these stunners.

(she points at her own eyes)

(MORE)

BAYTA (CONT'D)

So, sometimes the pirate was on his own, more's the pity. His cruelty was useful, but not my preference.

SELDON

He shared a compelling story with me. Yours, I assume.

BAYTA

Yes, he was a little confused about what was his and what was mine. He even thought he was the one with the powers. How'd you know the story wasn't his?

SELDON

I only suspected. I don't see much from in here. But I asked around. Rossem's single-child rule only applied to girls.

BAYTA

And some girls got mad about it. Can you blame us?

SELDON

No.

BAYTA

I'm going to kill Gaal Dornick. Is she important to you? Or just to the "other Seldon"?

SELDON

"Going to." Damnable girl just keeps on living.

BAYTA

Seldon, I've done a lot of stuff that might rightly fluff you.

(translating)

Upset you. But I'm here with a gift.

SELDON

You want to give me something.

BAYTA

Well, the pirate already brought it to you. I'm just pointing at it.

(beat)

An offer of partnership. Your speech in the Vault moved me.

(MORE)

BAYTA (CONT'D)

You said you wanted a "Union of Worlds." That's exactly what I want.

SELDON

Is it now?

BAYTA

How often have you sat here, chuntering away by yourself, imagining some eventuality where all the obstacles were removed from your path?

SELDON

And when all obstacles are removed from *your* path?

BAYTA

I have Foundation's resources, and I have... me.

(the plan:)

I force the remnants of Empire to acknowledge my rule -- and eventually, with the death of Dusk, who, confidentially, seems quite mad and not long for this life, I usher in a new age.

SELDON

And all everyone has to do is "love" you.

BAYTA

They will. More than anything.

(beat)

But they'll love *each other*, too. War will be a thing of the past. A thing our ancestors used to do.

Seldon takes that in for a moment. Then--

SELDON

You're right; you'll unite mankind more quickly than I would have. You'll give them a chance to withstand what's coming...

BAYTA

(raising an eyebrow)

'There something coming I should know about?

Seldon just gives her an enigmatic look. Baited hook.

SELDON

... it sounds great, what you're proposing. And all it costs them is any kind of freedom or happiness.

BAYTA

They'll be free within reason. And I have to correct you on the other thing, too. They'll be very happy.

SELDON

Because you'll command it.

BAYTA

Their nervous systems won't know the difference.

SELDON

And this paradise of compulsory joy, it only happens if the Second Foundation is defeated, yes? You want to know where they are, because they have powers like yours and they threaten you.

Bayta drinks, then raises the glass to him, a confirmation.

BAYTA

Ex-actly why I'm here.

(adds)

Also I don't like the thought of you out here on your own; it bothers me.

SELDON

I don't know where the Second Foundation is.

BAYTA

Well, that's a shame. But we could work on the riddle together. We could stride across worlds *together*, seeking them out?

SELDON

I'm a bit of a figment, young lady.
(gesturing around them)
I'm tied to this place. Condemned to a life of isolation by the "other Seldon".

BAYTA

You could ride inside me, couldn't you? Kind of like I rode inside the pirate?

SELDON

Yes... I did that once, a young monk named Constant--

BAYTA

You'd get a body, contact with people, a taste of my power, a chance to get your plan back in motion, to improve it even.

SELDON

I don't believe in what you want to do to mankind.

BAYTA

Are you sure? Think about it. A united humanity, *happy*, acting toward any single goal we select. We can extend the race forward through time without threat, sideways in space toward other galaxies, and outward in knowledge through technology and science...

She leads forward, smiling...

BAYTA (CONT'D)

And if all that sounds beige to you, then being with me still gives you the best chance to wait for me to make an error.

(beat)

Uneasy alliances can be loads of fun.

Seldon considers it. And in that moment he's lost, because she sees that he's considering it.

BAYTA (CONT'D)

Ahh. There he goes. The echo of that mythic brain is churning. Running along the branches of the decision tree like a pissed squirrel. Hopping on each branch, testing its strength.

SELDON

Stop metaphoring me to death.

BAYTA

Fine. Plain words. I wasn't in your plan. But I can be your plan. It will happen by force, but it will happen.

SELDON

For humanity then, unethical survival or ethical death.

BAYTA

Yes. Those are also plain words.

Finally, capitulation:

SELDON

There are no ethics after death, I suppose.

BAYTA

I'll drink to that.

She smiles at him, happy with her new teammate, as we --

CUT TO: